

him to make a well rounded and informed decision. The President can ignore the information provided by the victims and the law enforcement officers if he chooses to do so. I would hope that he would not. But while requirements that would force him to give particular weight to their views would most likely be unconstitutional, requiring the Department to make this information available to him, for whatever use he chooses to make of it, surely is not. Indeed, the President and the Department of Justice should be supportive of this bill as it should help return to the American people confidence in the clemency process that may have been lost following the release of the FALN and Los Macheteros terrorists.

It is unconscionable that in this instance, the views of the victims and law enforcement officers, the parties most affected by both the criminal act and the clemency, were ignored in the decision making process. This bill goes a long way in helping to prevent a recurrence of the defects in process in President Clinton's grant of clemency last September to the 11 terrorists. It will enhance the quality of information available so as to ensure a more balanced basis for the President's decisions regarding clemency. I am, therefore, pleased the committee has reported this legislation to the floor of the Senate, and I urge its prompt enactment.

ACTS OF BRUTALITY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, for the second time in one week, I come to the floor of the Senate to bring attention to an atrocious and despicable act of brutality against innocent men, women, and children.

Just 8 days ago, the Government of Sudan bombed nine towns, hospitals and feeding centers in the areas of the vast country outside of their control. As I said a week ago, they did not hit key rebel facilities or strongholds. However, they did bomb the town of Lui and the only rudimentary hospital and a TB clinic for a hundred mile radius.

They killed, maimed, and injured dozens of innocent and infirmed civilians.

As I said last week, I know this "target" well. It is the very hospital where I served as a volunteer surgeon and medical missionary just two years ago.

One of the worst aspects of the bombings is that the Government of Sudan knew exactly what these targets were. There was no mistaking it. Rebel forces had even caught government army agents attempting to mine the airstrip earlier in the year.

Last Sunday, 4 days after the bombing, the old Soviet cargo planes, which have been converted into bombers, returned. They dropped no bombs, but inspected the damage of the earlier raid and, we suspect, continued selecting targets.

On Tuesday morning, just past 10 a.m. local time, the bomber returned.

It dropped 15 more bombs on the Samaritan's Purse hospital it targeted last week.

The sad part of the story is that it is not surprising. For years the Government of Sudan has targeted the relief facilities of organizations it deems friendly toward the rebels. That is, those who operate exclusively in areas outside of government control or those who criticize the regime in Khartoum.

In the town of Yei, the hospital has been bombed so many times, bombings of the facility no longer necessary even makes it to wire reports.

On February 8 of this year, one of those routine bombings of civilian targets was especially horrific, when school children in the Nuba Mountains region—an isolated area especially devastated by government bombings and offensive—were killed as they took their lessons under a tree. At least a dozen students and two adults were killed by antipersonnel bombs pushed out the cargo doors of the converted cargo planes. These were school-children. They were not rebels nor child soldiers, but children learning to read.

In that case, we have good reason to believe that the strike was retribution for the local Roman Catholic Bishop, who has been charged with treason for coming to the United States in an effort to publicize the atrocities of his government against its own people. It was a school run by his church and a location that he was known to frequent.

In general, the United States policy is pointed in the right direction with respect to Sudan: its primary focus is on ending the war through multilateral negotiations, and on aiding the areas of greatest food insecurity.

But the United States policy is not without serious flaws, the greatest of which is failing to use our full diplomatic and economic weight to change the political environment where the Government of Sudan can repeatedly and intentionally bomb civilian targets, including schools and hospitals, and not face a single substantial objection from any member of the United Nations Security Council—nor any member of the United Nations.

That includes the United States. We do not sufficiently use the international body to promote peace to even raise objections about the murder of innocent civilians.

This failure of the international community to forcefully act or to raise even routine objections in international fora in an effort to stop the most brutal and devastating war since the Second World War is as inexplicable as it is tragic.

It is also hypocritical when compared to any number of United Nations sponsored peace missions.

Why is the United Nations so unwilling or unable to act? Because it lacks the necessary leadership among its members. It lacks the type public exposure to the truth of the horrors in

Sudan to cause sufficient shame and embarrassment to change inaction into action.

The United Nations and its members do not suffer from a lack of information about the war I have described as lurking on the edge of the world's conscience. The United Nations own Special Rapporteur for Sudan has submitted an extensive report detailing the atrocities and some common sense recommendations for the body to act upon. But nothing has happened.

It is behind this veil of obscurity that some of our closest allies' inaction has somehow instead become the United States "isolation" on the issue. It is behind this veil of obscurity and sense of this being an esoteric American issue that inaction has hidden and thrived.

That failure, that veil of obscurity, is the greatest tragedy of them all. The United Nations was formed to stop or prevent injustice such as what is happening in Sudan. But it has instead become a vehicle for obfuscation of responsibility. It has become the chosen forum for denial and the Sudanese government's charm offensive: a concerted and effective public relations effort which portrays them as simply "misunderstood" and the victim of undeserved American vilification.

The United Nations should be the forum to pull the war in Sudan from the edge of the world's consciousness, to the center of the world's attention. To fail to take every reasonable opportunity to use the United Nations to generate the necessary embarrassment and shame to drive our complicity and compel nations to act to end the war would be the greatest failure of our policy and a tragic loss of potential for good. It is our failure to fully use the United Nations as an effective instrument to end the war in Sudan which must become a major focus of the United States policy.

If the United Nations is not used as a forum for resolution of a conflict like this, and if we are not willing to assert American leadership within that forum, the unavoidable question becomes what, then, is the purpose of United Nations and our membership therein?

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, nearly two decades ago, President Carter submitted to the Senate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, known in shorthand as the "Womens' Convention."

In the two decades since then, the Committee on Foreign Relations has acted on the Convention only once. In 1994, the Committee voted to report the treaty by a strong majority of 13 to 5. Unfortunately, the 103rd Congress ended before the full Senate could act on the Convention.

Since then, not one hearing has been held in the Committee on Foreign Relations. Not one.

It is a great mystery to me that a treaty that calls for the international promotion of civil and human rights for women would not be considered by the Senate.

Over 160 nations have become party to this treaty, which entered into force in 1981. To its great discredit, the United States stands outside this treaty with a just handful of other nations.

There is hardly anything revolutionary about this treaty. It contains a specific set of obligations calling on member states to enact legal prohibitions on discrimination against women—prohibitions which, in large part, the United States has already enacted.

In fact, if the United States becomes a party to the treaty, we would not need to make any changes to U.S. law in order to comply with the treaty.

So what are the opponents of this treaty supposedly concerned about?

In 1994, the five Senators who voted against the Convention in the Committee filed "minority views." In it they expressed two concerns.

First, the dissenting Senators expressed concern that, in ratifying the Convention, several nations had taken reservations to the treaty, and thereby "cheapened the coin" of the treaty and the human rights norms that it embodies.

To this objection there are two answers. First, no treaty signed by dozens of nations will ever be perfect. It will be the product of numerous compromises, some of which will not always be acceptable.

That's why the Senate thinks it so important that we retain the right, whenever possible, to offer reservations to treaties—to attempt to remedy, or if necessary, opt-out, of any bad deals agreed to by our negotiators.

Second, this Senate has frequently entered reservations in ratifying human rights treaties in the 1980s and 1990s—such as the Convention on Torture, the Convention on Racial Discrimination, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In unanimously approving each of these treaties, the Senate imposed numerous reservations and understandings on U.S. ratification. In approving the Race Convention, for example, the Senate added three reservations, one understanding, and one condition.

Did we "cheapen the coin" of the Race Convention in doing so? The answer is no, because in entering these reservations we did not undermine the central purpose of the treaty—to require nations to outlaw racial discrimination.

The second objection registered by the five senators who voted against the Convention in 1994 is that joining the treaty was not the "best use" of our government's "energies" in promoting the human rights of women around the world.

This is a rather remarkable objection. What this group of senators was saying, in short, is that we should reserve our resources—and only promote human rights for women at certain times and in certain places.

I would hope that every senator would agree that we should promote equal rights for women at every opportunity—not when it suits us or when where it is the "best use" of our "energies." Advancing human rights and human liberty—for women and for everyone else—is a never-ending struggle.

Of course, the United States has a powerful voice, and we do not need to be a party to this Convention in order to speak out on women's rights. But we should join this Convention so we can be heard within the councils of the treaty.

Now the Senator from California stepped forward with a simple resolution which calls on the Senate to have hearings on the treaty, and for the Senate to act on the Convention by March 8, International Womens' Day.

Unfortunately, the effort to call up this resolution yesterday was objected to. So we are here on the floor today simply to try to raise the profile of this treaty. I hope that our colleagues are listening.

I urge the other members—whether on the Foreign Relations Committee or not—to step forward and join with us in urging support for this treaty.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, there is a lot of information swirling about concerning the Middle East Peace Process, specifically the so called "Syrian track." Facts and figures are being bandied about freely and there is little to indicate which are fact and which are fiction. Therefore I rise today to lay down a marker for the coming year and to express the hope that the administration will consult with Congress on a continual basis as this process picks up again.

Last year, Congress and the American people were presented with a bill for the Middle East peace process that was in excess of \$1 billion—that is \$1 billion more than the \$5 billion plus we already spend in the Middle East. And this extra bill was compiled without any congressional input. It was approved, but this is no way to do business.

The peace process is ongoing, but the President and the Department of State should consider themselves on notice from this moment on: This Congress will not rubber stamp another Wye Plantation Accord, we will not cough up another check without consultation and due consideration; we will not be left out of our Constitutionally assigned role.

I am a strong believer in the Middle East peace process. The Governments of Egypt, Jordan and Israel have shown enormous character and courage in making peace, and they deserve our

support. The nations of Egypt and Jordan, like Israel, need economic and military security in a bad neighborhood. They have made real sacrifices to do the right thing, and they have the backing of the United States.

However, ultimately, peace is not something that can be bought. Both Israel and its Arab partners, be they the Palestinians, the Lebanese or the Syrians, must make peace on their own terms without regard to sweeteners or inducements from the United States. The US has always played a historical role in promoting peace, but ultimately, peace only works when it is in the interests of the parties directly involved. Should we help? I believe we can. Should that help be the sole basis of an agreement? Unreservedly, no.

All of us who follow foreign policy issues are well aware that in this, the last year of the Clinton Administration, the President would like to preside over an historic peace between Israel and its remaining enemies in the Arab world. Perhaps we shouldn't blame President Clinton too much for yearning for a place in the history books. But President Clinton and his entire foreign policy team need to remember a few important points: 1: Congress has the power of the purse; 2: We are not the Syrian parliament: We will not rubber stamp any agreement with any price tag; 3: Notwithstanding rumors to the contrary, we are interested and wish to be kept apprised of important developments in American diplomacy. In other words, Mr. President, come and talk to us. Keep us in the loop.

I have read in the newspapers that Israel is looking at the security implications of returning the Golan Heights and is also considering requesting a security package from the United States which will be very costly. There are ongoing discussions between Israel and the Defense Department on this matter. But Congress has not been briefed. Syria too, has visions of sugar plum fairies dancing into Damascus with billions in aid; and I am sure the Lebanese will not be too far behind.

There will be many reasons to support a peace in the Middle East, but much will depend upon exactly what commitments will be expected of the United States. The President must not again make the mistake of signing IOUs which, this time, the Congress may have no intention of covering. We are willing partners in peace, but we will not accept the presentation of another fait accompli. Mr. President, we look forward to hearing from you—often.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, today I rise in recognition of Women's History Month—a time to honor the many great women leaders from our past and present who have served our Nation so well. These women have worked diligently to achieve social